Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A system, comprising a network node configured to negotiate for connections for high priority calls received at the node in the face of otherwise congested outbound communication links.

2. A system as in claim 1, wherein the negotiation is conducted in a fashion that will preserve connections for existing calls associated with the node.

3. A system as in claim 2, wherein the negotiation is conducted so as to cause one or more of the existing calls to consume less bandwidth over the outbound communication links than was consumed at a time prior to reception of the high priority calls.

4. A system as in claim 3, wherein the node is configured to initiate the negotiation depending on the availability of codec resources at the node.

5. A system as in claim 1, wherein the high priority calls comprise voice calls.

6. A system as in claim 1, wherein the node is configured to commence negotiations according to availability of codec resources at the node.

7. A system as in claim 1, wherein the node is configured to negotiate for one or more voice channels to accommodate the high priority calls depending upon selected compression schemes for existing calls transported on the outbound communication links.

8. A method comprising managing a communication link between nodes of a communication network so as to ensure connection availability for one or more high priority calls over the communication link through dynamic renegotiations of call parameters for existing calls transported over the communication link.

9. A method as in claim 8, wherein the calls are voice calls.

10. A method as in claim 9, wherein the communication link supports communications according to the Asynchronous Transfer Mode.

11. A method as in claim 10, wherein the dynamic renegotiations comprise negotiations of compression schemes for the voice calls.

12. A method as in claim 11, wherein the dynamic renegotiations are supported according to codec availability at the nodes.

13. A method as in claim 12, wherein the dynamic renegotiations are accomplished through the exchange of OAM cells between the nodes.

14. A method as in claim 12, wherein codec availability is determined according to profile information maintained by the nodes.

15. A method as in claim 12, wherein the high priority calls are determined as such according to database information regarding called numbers.

16. A network comprising:

a number of nodes connected through one or more communication links; and

a resource manager configured to allocate bandwidth over the communication links to high priority calls received at one or more of the nodes without dropping existing calls within the network.

17. The network of claim 16 wherein the resource manager allocates bandwidth through dynamic renegotiations of existing bandwidth utilization within the network.

18. The network of claim 17 wherein the resource manager is a distributed resource among the nodes of the network.

19. The network of claim 17 wherein the nodes each support multiple codec resources, which compress voice information transmitted over the communication link.

20. The network of claim 17 wherein the dynamic renegotiations are supported through the exchange of OAM cells between the nodes.

Sub Bd. cncl.